

# Best Management Practices

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION



## Swainsons warbler

*Limnothlypis swainsonii*

Common name • Swainsons warbler

Scientific name • *Limnothlypis swainsonii*

State status • Endangered

### Ecology

Swainsons warblers are secretive, neotropical migrants that nest in southeastern United States and winter in Belize and on Caribbean islands. In Missouri, they may be found in the southeastern part of the state, as well as in favorable habitat along the southern border. Swainsons warblers inhabit and breed in stands of giant cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*) within extensively forested landscapes along stream and river flood plains. To be used by these birds, these areas must have high canopy cover and dense vegetation. Breeding begins in April, with females building nests approximately 2-10 feet above the ground. Clutches typically have three eggs. Young hatch after 13-15 days of incubation, leave the nest at 10-12 days and remain with the adults for another two-three weeks. Swainsons warblers prey on insects that they find among leaf litter.

### Reasons for Decline

There are no records indicating Swainsons warblers were ever common in Missouri. However, large-scale timber harvests and conversion of bottomland forests to agriculture and reservoirs has likely caused dramatic declines in populations. In particular, cane removal eliminates preferred breeding habitat for these migratory birds.

### Specific Recommendations

Swainsons warblers have very narrow habitat requirements and, thus, are dependent upon protection and restoration of canebrakes, swamps and thickets in moist bottomland woods.

→ Project activities should not occur within 100 feet of wetland habitat within the range of this species between April 1 and October 1 since these birds stay near breeding habitat until migration.

→ Erosion and sediment controls should be implemented, maintained and monitored for the duration of the project.

→ Maintain special habitat features such as tall dense stands of giant cane, overstory canopy and leaf litter on ground to provide habitat for Swainsons warblers.

→ Draining or destroying known wetland habitat along streams should be avoided.

→ Forests should be thinned occasionally between October 1 and April 1 to allow for new growth.

### General Recommendations

Refer to Management Recommendations for Construction Projects Affecting Missouri Wetlands and Management Recommendations for Construction Projects Affecting Missouri Streams and Rivers.

### Information Contacts

For further information regarding regulations for development in wetlands, rivers and streams, contact:

Missouri Department of Conservation  
Policy Coordination Section  
P.O. Box 180  
2901 W. Truman Blvd  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180  
Telephone: 573/751-4115

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Environmental Quality  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176  
Telephone: 573/526-3315

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Regulatory Branch  
700 Federal Building  
Kansas City, MO 64106-2896  
Telephone: 816/983-3990

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division  
901 North 5th Street  
Kansas City, KS 66101  
Telephone: 913/551-7307

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Ecological Services Field Office  
608 E. Cherry Street, Room 200  
Columbia, MO 65201  
Telephone: 573/876-1911

### Disclaimer

These Best Management Practices were prepared by the Missouri Department of Conservation with assistance from other state agencies, contractors and others to provide guidance to those people who wish to voluntarily act to protect wildlife and habitat. Compliance with Best Management Practices is not required by the Missouri wildlife and forestry law nor by any regulation of the Missouri Conservation Commission. Other federal, state or local laws may affect construction practices.